

NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS (IRELAND).

RETURN to an Order of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 24 March 1871;—*for*,

COPY "of the MEMORIAL presented by the TEACHERS of IRISH NATIONAL
SCHOOLS to HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT during the present Year."

To the Right Honourable *William Ewart Gladstone*, M.P., First Lord of the
Treasury.

The Memorial of the National School Teachers of Ireland,

Respectfully sheweth,

THAT Memorialists at the end of year 1868 numbered 8,620, and had under their care 967,563 pupils. That the scanty remuneration your Memorialists receive from all sources is wholly inadequate to the decent maintenance of themselves and their families, and out of all proportion to the important services rendered by them to the State. That Memorialists respectfully submit that their services are worthy of more generous recognition than at present vouchsafed them, and that on the score of salary they should be placed on a level with their brethren in England, whose average salaries are, for males, 91 *l.* 5 *s.* 11 *d.*; females, 56 *l.* 1 *s.* 7 *d.*, as compared with 35 *l.* and 28 *l.* 10 *s.* respectively in Ireland.

That the teachers when worn out and compelled to leave the service of the Board, are, as a rule, unable to turn the small sum granted by the Commissioners as retiring allowance to any profitable account; and only serving to support them for a comparatively short period, leaves them finally to the miseries of an unprovided for old age. That it cannot be expected that young persons will join or remain in the profession, unless some suitable provision be made for their declining years. That many teachers now become inefficient from age or infirmity would, if pensions were granted them, give place to younger and more vigorous candidates. That for these reasons it would be only a matter of policy for the State to place the teacher of the ordinary national school on an equality with the teacher of the model school, by granting him an adequate pension when worn out after a long career of usefulness in the service of his country. It has been objected that, owing to the peculiarity of the teacher's position, relative to the mode of his appointment and dismissal, that he cannot be regarded as a civil servant. In reply, your Memorialists respectfully submit that the principles upon which the State pays him his salary, *viz.*, satisfactory evidence of competency, by examination before a Government official, and the efficient performance of duty, should also determine, as in the case of other public servants, the payment of a pension after a specified term of service.

That in the absence of any local enactment to enforce regular attendance, and having regard to the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, in an educational point of view, *viz.*, the comparative thinness of the population, and the inability of the peasantry and labouring classes to forego their children's aid in the hurried seasons, Memorialists apprehend that the principle of paying the teachers by results, as based upon the children's attendance, whether viewed with regard to the number attending school, or the number of attendances made by each child, will, if introduced in any shape, prove prejudicial, not only to the interests of the teachers, but to the interests of education in general.

That

That from the nature of the teacher's avocation, his social standing should be such as to command deferential consideration from the surrounding peasantry, but when compelled to lodge, as is too often the case, in poor miserable dwellings, he loses all the prestige his profession confers. That in the rural districts, where this want is most felt, travelling to and from his school in wet or inclement weather, has a most depressing effect upon the energies of the teacher, who, had he been provided with a residence in the neighbourhood of his school, would arrive fresh for the performance of his duties. That the public suffer much from the teacher being unprovided with a free residence in the neighbourhood of his school, inasmuch as he can never establish a morning or an evening school with any chance of success, and can never have that close interest in any place that denies him a roof to shelter himself and his family. That the Commissioners have appreciated the force of what is here stated may be inferred from the fact that the masters employed in the schools under their own immediate management, are provided with free residences, or failing this, a money grant is given in lieu. That, compared with the primary teachers in England, your Memorialists are disadvantageously situated in this respect. In England 52 per cent. of the certificated teachers are provided with free residences, while only 14 per cent. of the Irish national schools are so favourably circumstanced.

That your Memorialists, while cheerfully testifying to the kindness and consideration generally shown by the managers of their schools, nevertheless regard the arbitrary power vested in them of removing the teacher at a moment's notice, and without assigning cause, as a grievance which requires immediate redress. That your Memorialists are the only class in the public service who are liable to removal from their situations without right of appeal to any tribunal whatever. Your Memorialists are, therefore, of opinion that such a limitation should be placed on this power, as that the efficient and deserving teacher shall be shielded from the consequences which its undue exercise would be sure to entail upon himself and his family.

That should the school pence continue to decrease in the future, in the same ratio as they have in the past, there is reason to apprehend that this source of the teacher's income will cease altogether; and as the amount subscribed by the local gentry and others is merely nominal, only 3½ per cent. of the teacher's income being derived from this source, your Memorialists express their conviction that nothing short of an educational rate will ever make the landed proprietary of Ireland sufficiently alive to the obligations which reasonably and naturally devolve upon them in this matter of primary education.

And your Memorialists will ever pray.

(signed) *John Harte.*

28 January 1871.

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(IRELAND).

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TEACHERS of IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS to HER
MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT during the present
Term.

(*Mr. Butler.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
4 April 1871.

158.

Under 1 oz.